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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Subject: Activities of WFA field personnel with regards to gasoline rationing and selective-service deferment.

Distribution: To AAA State Chairmen and State Extension Directors

Suggested Use: For your information and in answering queries

Because of recent statements in the public press and queries which have come to the Department on the activities of AAA field personnel with respect to selective-service deferment and gasoline rationing, the following excerpt from the Congressional Record is reproduced. Judge Malcolm C. Tarver, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, introduced into the Record the statement of War Food Administrator Marvin Jones, which sets forth the position of War Food Administration. Judge Tarver's statement and that of Judge Jones follow:

"Mr. Tarver: Last week in connection with the passage of the agricultural appropriation bill the House considered what is known as the Harness amendment having to do with proposed restrictions of alleged activities of triple A committees in connection with the deferment of men for military service, the rationing of farm machinery, and so forth. At that time I had not been advised of the position of the War Food Administration, of which the Agricultural Adjustment Agency is a constituent part, with regard to these alleged activities. I have here a statement from Judge Marvin Jones, Administrator of the War Food Administration, which gives the position of the War Food Administration with regard to this subject matter. I think in all fairness to him and to the War Food Administration it should be inserted in the Record.

"I therefore ask unanimous consent that it may be inserted in the Record at this point in connection with my remarks.

"The Speaker pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

"There was no objection. (The matter referred to follows:)"

War Food Administration
Washington

Hon. Malcolm C. Tarver,
House of Representatives.

Dear Judge: In response to your request I am sending the attached statement dealing with activities of War Food Administration field personnel with regard to gasoline rationing and selective-service deferment.

Sincerely yours,

Marvin Jones
Administrator.

"An amendment to the agricultural appropriations bill approved by the House Thursday, March 23, provides: 'That none of the funds appropriated in this bill shall be paid out of the salary, per diem allowance, or expenses of any person who personally or by letter demands that a farmer join the triple-A program as a condition of draft deferment or for the granting of a priority certificate for any rationed article or commodity.'

"The discussions of this amendment indicate the need for a statement clarifying the relation of A.A.A. committees to these activities and how responsibilities of the War Food Administration in connection with selective-service deferment and rationing are handled.

"The committees that make recommendations to local selective-service boards and the committees that handle farm machinery rationing are not A.A.A. committees. Hence, the A.A.A. could not use this means and does not use any other means of forcing anyone to take part in the A.A.A. program.

"In connection with deferments, the Agricultural Extension Service is responsible, under a memorandum issued by the War Food Administration November 26, 1943, for 'collecting and transmitting to county war boards such factual information as selective-service boards may request from county war boards regarding the deferment of individual farm operators and agricultural workers.'

"Eligibility of agricultural workers and farm operators for deferment pursuant to the provisions of the Tydings amendment is determined on the basis of the number of war units which they are producing. County agricultural agents are responsible for collecting information on the number of war units when requested to do so by the local draft board. This information is reported to the local draft board through the county war boards. Membership of the county war board includes representatives of offices of all Federal agricultural agencies operating in the county, including the county agent and the A.A.A. chairman. A.A.A. records are available to the county agent if he wishes to use them in the preparation of production information requested by the local draft board.

"Because there is not enough farm machinery to go around, many items of machinery have to be rationed. The War Food Administration has established county farm rationing committees to handle the rationing of these items. These are not A.A.A. committees. They are five-man committees composed of three farmers and two farm machinery dealers. One of the farmer members is a member of the county A.A.A. committee.

"A.A.A. community and county committees are authorized by the War Food Administration to provide information on farm operations as a basis for allotment of gasoline rations for nonhighway use when requested to do so by local war-price and rationing boards. The function of the A.A.A. committees is to act in behalf of the farmer in obtaining necessary gasoline for farming operations regardless of whether or not the farmer is a member of the county agricultural conservation association.

"Last year when farmers in some parts of the country were experiencing difficulty in obtaining adequate gasoline to operate trucks, tractors, and other motorized farm equipment, Members of Congress asked that the local A.A.A. committees be requested to help determine the gasoline needs of farmers. Local ration boards do not have information on which to determine the needs of farmers.

"A.A.A. committeemen are given the responsibility by the War Food Administration for informing individual farmers of the wartime needs for farm products and encouraging them to produce in accordance with these needs. In carrying out this responsibility A.A.A. committees have quite generally adopted a farm-plan work sheet on which the farmer and the committeeman record the operations and the intentions of the farmer. These farm-plan sheets are not designed to be used as a basis for deferment and the language objected to on the forms used last year is eliminated. However, they do provide a helpful source of information on which local draft boards could base action on selective-serve deferment and on which local ration boards could determine non-highway gasoline needs of the farmer. The farm-plan sheets are in no sense a contract and have nothing to do with membership in the county agricultural conservation association.

"When farmers wish to qualify for agricultural conservation payments, they are asked to indicate on a form which they sign their desire and intention to take part in the program. If they wish to sign such a statement and carry out the necessary conservation practices on their farm, they become members of the county agricultural conservation association and qualify for payments under the provisions of the program.

"Provisions of A.A.A. legislation providing for adjustment of production are not now in operation except in the case of tobacco. Congress last summer passed a joint resolution directing that a referendum among tobacco producers be held and that tobacco quotas be applied if the vote of growers showed that they desired it. The vote of growers favored tobacco quotas and acreage allotments were applied in accordance with the legislation."

